

ATMAGNAN
OR LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

BY
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ATMAGNAN

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THOSE who have followed Mr. Vaswani's thought, and its application to the living movements of the day, as expressed in the series of books which he has given to the world during the past couple of years, will be deeply interested in the disclosure in "Atmagnan" of the philosophical secret of his thought and action. But the book is more than an indirect biography. It is an expression, through a unique combination of intuition, reasoning and eloquence, of Asia's central concept—the spiritual unity of humanity. The author wastes little time in 'whipping the dead horses' of materialism and falsely-called rationalism. With just sufficient criticism to clear the way, he sets out, mainly in positive terms, and always in language of engaging style and utmost clarity, the religious philosophy centring round the Hindu concept of 'Knowledge of the Self'. In this way he

shows how the unity of the religions may be achieved—not necessarily by the dropping of surface distinctions, but by giving their personalities and teachings a universal meaning and application.

The book is not merely an extension of a former essay, but a new creation throbbing with the author's mature life. Its message is the deepest and the most urgently needed to which the distracted world can give ear.

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ATMAGN OR LIFE IN THE INTRODUCTORY

THIS volume consists of a
presented in an expanded
wrote for the World Congress
Berlin.

I have endeavoured in this
pret the value of a religious pi
has gradually developed in my
meditated upon the Hindu teach
Atmagnan. This Knowledge
I regard as *Life*. It is not so
conceptual or notional; it
Spirit.

The general standpoint, it
that of Synthetic Idealism. The
circumstances under which it
written did not allow me to do

a very compressed exposition of a few fundamental conceptions. I wished to find time to follow this elementary expression of my views by a more reasoned treatise on Hindu Synthesis drawing into a unified scheme the essentials of the Religious Philosophy, as I understand it, of some of the Hindu Scriptures.

We are, I believe, in the midst of an epochal period in the evolution of the Race. The historical study of religions, utilising sociological, anthropological and biological researches, has snubbed 'scientific' materialism by pointing out that the religious sentiment has *constants* which persist in all religions. The 'higher criticism' has shown that free thought is not the foe of faith; and we are beginning to understand the *irreverence* of intolerance. 'Scientific' agnosticism, confining experience to phenomena and their laws, is being steadily supplanted by an enlarged conception of experience. Idealistic reaction against the Naturalism of Mill and Spencer has, I believe, made steady progress. The French thinker Bergson makes Freedom the basis of his system; the ultimate Reality, he points out,

is a free Creative Activity, a free Creative Consciousness—the freedom of the evolutive force showing itself in the creation of beautiful forms of Nature. The writings of Eucken—a great German thinker—are an able vindication of the spiritual interpretation of the values and meaning of life. In many scientific circles, a mechanistic hypothesis is no longer accepted as an adequate theory of the universe. As Dr. Driesch said in his Gifford Lectures on “The Science and Philosophy of the Organism”:—“We must be cautious in admitting that any organic feature has been explained even in the most general way by the action of physical forces.” The evolutionary concept has rendered service to the cause of religion by substituting a *genetic* for the old *rationalistic* way of interpreting religious beliefs.

The nineteenth-century foundations of life have crumbled; another basis is being eagerly sought for life-process and its purpose. A Social Idea is growing upon the age; exaggerated individualism is discredited; the individual is interpreted as a member of a social whole: the forces of negation are being exhausted; man cannot long disown the Ideal,

nor resist the uprush of the spiritual life in him. The social and political unrest of to-day is a painful confession concerning the inadequacy of 'modern' life and the urgent need to secure a *spiritual centre* for civilisation. The passion for freedom, the craving for a soul-satisfying culture, the cry for a just democracy, the desire to secure a harmony of religion and science, the new interest in art, the new socio-economic forces asking for international intercourse, the new psychic investigations stirred by an impulse to rend the veil between this world and the Unseen, the yearning for some sustaining system of life,—are a witness, I believe, to the necessity of a Spiritual Synthesis of the meaning and values of experience. Who, if not India, may give such a Synthesis to a waiting world?

In the West I found how one by one the dogmas of ecclesiasticism were dying. 'Divine Revelation' was no longer regarded as a monopoly of the past but as a continuous progressive process of God's seeking after Man. I found the doctrine of Divine Immanence was receiving a new emphasis and application. Theologians like Estlin Carpenter, thinkers like

Rashdal and Illingworth, teachers of spiritual insight like Campbell were, in diverse ways, disseminating the vital truths of a religion of the spiritual life. Scientific thinkers of the culture and calibre of Sir Oliver Lodge were reaffirming truths suggestive of Karma and Reincarnation. In France, the Paris School of Theology was struggling against the traditional system of dogmatics and pressing the claims of a religion of the spirit. I heard Dr. Harnack, the distinguished theologian of Germany, declare that the Church must be delivered from *dogmatic* Christianity. There was being made—as it seemed to me—an effort to disengage the inner contents of spiritual life from the envelopes of creeds and traditions. The idea was growing that religion was not a creed but a *total-view*, a life-attitude to the Universe. The War interrupted the process of spiritual idealism; the War brought to a climax the naturalistic forces of Western life. But after the War there is in many groups, to-day, a renewed craving for a Spiritual Synthesis of the values and truths of experience. India, I believe, can give such a Synthesis.

And yet I know that Indian Idealism is being trampled upon in India. Several years have passed since I returned with new experiences and new hopes from my lonely wanderings in the West; and I looked into the eyes of India's men and women buying and selling in the market-place. I looked and found them busy with many things, but not the one thing needful; and with a mournful cry I cried:—"Where, O Lord! where is the song of the Rishis of the Past?" And I looked into the eyes of young men studying science and arts at schools and universities. I found they were eager for intellectual attainments but not for self-renunciation. And I looked into the many wounds with which is wounded the Ancient Mother. And I looked into the temples, once honoured centres of the sacred Light. And I looked into the faces of the poor, down-trodden, patient masses of the land. And I cried with a mournful cry:—"Where art thou, O Lord! and where the song of the Rishis of the Past?" Can it be that the Ancient Message is dead? Is the sacred Song stilled for ever? I cannot think so. Not yet are snapped the chords of our souls. For still if

some one pure and devout, a teacher of Idealism, a *sadhu*, a Bhakta comes to us, we offer him the homage of our hearts. We are fallen; but under a merciful Providence that shapes India's life, we are, I believe, being prepared to rise again and play our part in building a new civilisation. Will the day come soon when men and women of East and West may glimpse the beauty of the Rishis' vision and worship in the Temple of Humanity the "One whom the Sages call by many names"? As the darkness is deepening, I cling yet closer to my faith that India will yet be free, and the Nations will yet be brothers. For they all are His. And the world we live in is beautiful!

Karachi
June, 1922

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T. L. VASWANI

T. Vaswani

THE QUEST THROUGH THE AGES

INDIA'S life through the centuries has been one long quest for the living Infinite Ideal. Her mind, eager for a vision of the world-whole, has faced the problem of reality in the faith that the organism of experience is spiritual. Her ruling passion has been *Adhyatma Vidya*—the science of the Self. Embedded in her song and poetry, her art and philosophy, her lyric poems of love, her tender hymns of faith, is this Idea of the *Atman*.

The world has despised her; but she has borne witness to her world-idea, her *Atman*-consciousness. The Vedic singers were the earliest idealists. The earliest Greek thinkers—Thales and others—interpreted reality in terms not of what is *within* (the *Atman*) but of material reality, *e.g.*, water, fire, etc. India has subordinated the *not-self* to the Self—the *anatman* to the *Atman*. Her sacred books are inspired by a vision of *immaterialism*. The Greek studied the symmetries and relations of form

and life, and was qualified to interpret art and practical philosophy. But Greek religion was a religion of *this* world,—dreadfully anthropomorphic! The Hindu craved for the *Atman*; so he developed a system of *yoga*, a social polity of *dharma*, a religion of *communion*. *Inwardness* was a characteristic of the *rishi's* life; he did not entangle himself in *externalism*; he saw the world-secret from within; therefore was he called the *rishi*,—the seer. In the Vedic age he sang of ‘the One whom the sages call by many names’; and, again, of ‘Him the Unitary Being’ ‘in whom all live, move, and have their being’. In a later age—the age of the Upanishads—the same idea was sung,—the idea of the One *Atman* immanent in all. Thus we read in one verse: “He who dwells in man and He who dwells in the sun are one and the same.” In another verse the *Atman* is adored as “the Eye of the eye, the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Life of life”. Thus God is represented as being not alien to the universe, not the ‘other’ of Nature, but in intimate and abiding relations with Nature and man. A German thinker,

Dr. Duessen, rightly observed that to the ancient *rishi* came the most intimate insight into the ultimate mystery of being.

Think again of the Book which is, as no other book, the Bible of India—the Bhagavad-Gita,—the Song of Krishna. The Bhagavad-Gita, too, sings in rapturous strains of the One in Whose presence all things become bright, all things become sacred, become avenues of the Eternal Light. The same world-idea is eloquent in the songs and sayings of the Teachers of mediæval India. Nanak, the apostle of harmony, Kabir, the sweet singer of *bhakti*, Farid the Mahomedan mystic, Mirabai the queen of beauty wounded with the love of God, Surdas the singing apostle of Love, Tulsidas the creator of classics which in poetic art and inspiration well match Goethe, Tukaram the bhakti-saint of the South, Chaitanya the philosopher smitten with the yearning of a woman-soul for a vision of Ancient Beauty—Jaidev, Namdev, Trilochan, Ramanand, Ravidas, Sudhama, Dhanna, Angad, Arjan and others in the long line of India's mediæval mystics bear witness to India's aspiration towards the Eternal Self.

And India has developed a religious philosophy which, I believe, is calculated to be of great service to modern life. That India has something to give is what not many in the West seem to realise. Many of the tourists who think they know India, because they have visited Karachi, Calcutta or Bombay, speak of the subtle scepticism of the educated, their deep dissatisfaction with popular faith, their veiled agnosticism and open indifference, if not aggressive atheism. Such critics interpret the *seeming*, not the *being*; the externals, not the soul, of India. They ignore the presence in modern India of the *forces* steadily gathering up and silently preparing India for her world-ministry. ✓

WHICH GOD SHALL WE WORSHIP?

THE principle which lies at the very heart of Hindu religious philosophy may be stated thus: God is the Atman, the Self-revealing Spirit. Not without reason is God referred to in the Chandogyopanishad as "the bridge" of the world-whole. So, too, we read in the Kathopanishad and, again, in the Mandok-yopanishad that "all that is shines through His lustre". Again, in the Svarajyasiddhi God is spoken of "as the Self-illuminated Inner Self of all".

The view-point of the Upanishads may, I think, be expressed in brief thus: *The Infinite is the Immediate.* The phenomenal or the *sense-immediate* is not the true Immediate. No phenomenon is self-sustaining; it cannot explain itself. So the ancient thinkers spoke of it as *maya*. The finite is not self-explanatory; it does not satisfy thought, neither does

it satisfy feeling. Who ever found ultimate satisfaction in the finite? Browning's *Last Ride Together* is a fine poem in which the lover is represented as riding with the finite and feeling it an oppressive burden. So it ever has been: the finite, the sense-given, the phenomenal, the pleasure of *sthula sarira*, the mass of sensations, never satisfied the human heart. The singers of the Upanishads wished to break the tyranny of the senses; they felt that the earth's pleasures and honours lacked wholeness; they discerned the truth that the Infinite is the Immediate.

And this brings me to the thought that the Eternal is the In-soul, the *Antaryamin* of all. The Agnostic's 'Unknowable'—an unrelated 'Absolute' standing aloof from the finite—is but a deification of 'negativity'. Hamilton and Spencer erred in interpreting the Absolute as the unrelated. Even Plato failed to rise to the full height of his conception of God as the Good. Plato's Deity was still an eternal Being "manifested as something without". The truth is, there is a mystic mingling of the Infinite and the finite. The Atman is not the cold barren Being of abstract ontology,

nor the static 'substance' of mediæval theology. The Absolute that is incapable of establishing relations with the finite is a poor, wooden being. 'God' is the *Atman*—the Self-revealing Reality—the Time-less Self in contact with the soul. So the Upanishads speak of God as 'Perfect Self-consciousness,' and, again, as the 'Spirit in the heart'.

Religion, thus, is not a *dogma* but *consciousness*,—not a *creed* imposed *ab extra* but a personal, vital realisation of the Self. Mere concepts of God are unavailing. Religion without an *Atman*-consciousness becomes either legalism or rationalism. Nature-religions, too, are inadequate. Real religion involves an inward and personal factor; real religion is personal—not in the sense of being a private claim, but in the sense that it is a realisation by feeling, thought and will of our place in the Society of God.

This consciousness starts with a groping beyond sense and thought,—a feeling of the *other-than-I*—and is consummated in consciousness of the Immediate. It has *intellectual contents*. Ritschialism failed because it ignored this truth: it was anti-intellectualistic.

To deny intellectual contents to Life in the Spirit is to reduce religion to pure subjectivity. Spiritual experience involves (1) a cognition of an other-than-I, (2) an emotion of reverence, and (3) a volition of dependence on, and service of, the Divine. While saying, then, that the basis of religion and religious philosophy is *consciousness*, I am anxious to repudiate *individualism*. Religion is an inner experience and, therefore, no interpretation of it is possible without some personal apprehension by *our whole nature*. But this personal experience and apprehension must be supplemented by the religious experiences of the race. Hence the method of personal meditation, contemplation, and cogitation must be supplemented by *sadh-sang*, of fellowship with great souls, of study of the lives of prophets and saints and inspired geniuses.

Let me, in this connection, say that the God-Idea involved in the experience of the Race must be interpreted by *religious reason*,—by reason, *i.e.*, which may appreciate the *spiritual values of life*. Formal principles of theoretical reason may corroborate, but

can not by themselves establish, the objective validity of the religious Ideal. The *logic of religion* is personal apprehension by our whole nature supplemented by the religious experience of the Race.

It is necessary to add that this spiritual experience is a *gradual* process, a progressive experience; for He reveals Himself as men are able to receive Him. God-experience is informed with reason but is more than 'notional,' more than a logical inference. Though rational, it is more than intellectual. It is a response to the Life of the Spirit. Not the intellect alone but the whole dynamic personality—reason, will, conscience, heart—must be active to assimilate the self-revelation of the *Atman*. 'Pragmatism' has rendered one service, it has vindicated the *life-value* of truth. 'Conceptual flight' is unavailing; 'vital experience' is needed. This is the truth emphasised by the 'Chicago School' founded by James. Pragmatism has shown the error in Hegel's over-emphasis of the rationalistic aspects of experience to the entire neglect of the volitional and emotional factors in spiritual experience. Contact with God involves much more than

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the functioning of what in Hindu psychology is called the *manas* (mind): it demands prayer and meditation and *sadhsang* and obedience to the moral law and sacrificial love. Mind, conscience, heart and will must *all* be active, not the intellect alone, for a *knowledge* of the Atman. The Kathopanishad has well declared: "He is known through *life*." God, *i.e.*, is known not *ontologically* but *dynamically*.

This God-experience is, to my mind, the supreme fact in the religious history of the Race. It becomes a perception of the Infinite in the world's thinkers; it grows into the glory of God-vision in a Christ, a Krishna, a Chaitanya. It is not merely emotional; it is not void of cognitive consciousness. Neither is it merely intellectual. It is an experience of vital contact of the Atman with the universe. God has been pictured often in *human* (and animal) forms; the low anthropomorphic conception of God must give way to one based on a theomorphic view of human nature. Man is a symbol of God.

In several passages the Upanishads speak of the *Atman* as the *Sachchitanandam*—the simple synthesis of existence, consciousness

and bliss. We read in the *Atmabodha* :—" As light belongs to the sun, and coldness to water, and heat to fire, so do existence, consciousness, bliss, eternity and holiness belong by nature to the Self." And mediæval *bhaktas* of India sang over and over again of *prasad*, the love of God. Religion is often described as the striving of man for God : man, it has been said, seeks God. Yes : but the *Puranas* teach the truth that God, also, seeks man. In truth, man would not seek God if God were not by him already. In man's aspiration for the Eternal is the stir of Infinite Love. So it is that man does not acquiesce in a Godless world : there is in the heart of man the presence of the *Atman*. The love of God flowing as a spiritual force into every soul is a fact to which the psychology of religion will, I believe, bear ample witness in the coming days. Creation is God's *kripa* stooping to the plane of Matter to raise each life's star, smothered in unconsciousness, to the status of the Spirit. The very punishment which pursues the sinner is the persistence of a Loving Purpose ; it is the reaction of His Love against sin.

This idea of God, it will be seen, is more than metaphysical. Aristotle conceived of God as a self-sufficient contemplative Being. But Love is more than contemplation. It is the Spirit of Love who, through the many jars and discords of life, is working out the redemption of the Universe. The Supreme Reality helps us in daily life; the Real is Revelational; the Real is the Good. The Universe is the love-offering of the Good; and Love is God's own Self. Man's life, conscious and sub-conscious, is in daily deepening contact with Love. That Love breathes benediction upon us and looks with saving sanctity at us to remould the Man in each, and fashion into fairness every one as a child of Light. And because we are built in the evolution of Love, we know that we are immortal. Our spiritual heritage is a witness to the immortality of the soul. ✓

THE LOGIC OF RELIGION

LET me hurriedly refer to some implications of this idea. The truth that the Real is self-revealing involves the idea of the *essential* nature of religion. Religion is not an *accident* of human life; religion is the constitution of the soul. Hence religion is at once *natural* and *revealed*. It is natural in the sense that it is intrinsically adapted to human nature: the soul's natural cry is for God: the heart gravitates to the World-Heart. Religion is *revealed* in the sense that it is the life of the Atman. The reality of religion asserts itself as we interpret the One through religious reason. It is a matter of regret that religious reason has not yet received proper attention from students of thought. There are many books in western literature on the "Critique of Pure Reason"; but there is a lack of books on what I may call the Critique of Religious Reason. Yet it is religious reason which

is the source of Ideals. Many of the interpretations of religious consciousness given by western thinkers are inadequate, because they ignore *religious* reason. Thus Ribot in "The Psychology of Emotion" resolves religion into 'fear of the unknown'. So Thomas Hobbes wrote of religion in the 'Leviathan'—"Fear of power invisible, feigned by the mind or imagined from tales publicly allowed, *Religion*: not allowed, *Superstition*"! But fear will not, I submit, give rise to faith in the Unseen; and religion is not fear but response to the Atman in the heart. Religious sentiment is rooted in man. To study the constitution of the soul is to know that it is *natural* for man to give response to God. As star shines to star, as sparks of flame rise upwards, so does the soul of man turn towards the Parent-Spirit.✓

In the absence of a true appreciation of Religious Reason, confusion has been created in the name of religious psychology by many western writers on the subject. Spencer finds the origin of religion in the primitive man's interpretation of dreams! Fuerbach, whose "Essence of Christianity" is a

misreading of that religion, would have us believe that religion is due to ignorant personification of man's own desires ! Gruppe does not hesitate to say that religion has its origin in selfishness ! Haeckel would have us accept his materialistic monism as the purest monotheism. Fawcett writes of the "god-that-is-to-be"; "the deity that neither is nor ever will be finally perfect and complete" ! So Vacherot, the French thinker, maintains that perfection is incompatible with real existence and that what we call God is only a product of human intellectual operations ! According to some upholders of medical materialism, St. Paul was an epileptic, and St. Theresa an hysteriac, and St. Francis of Assisi a degenerate ! 'Geniuses'—do you call them ? But genius, you are told, is only "one of the many branches of the neuropathic tree" ! So it is that the psychology of religion, as interpreted by several western thinkers, yields the conclusion that the God-idea is an illusion ! But if the God-idea be an illusion, whence, I ask, the origin of this stupendous illusion ? Fiske's words are appropriate here :—
"If the relation thus established in the morning

twilight of man's existence between the human soul and a world invisible and immaterial is a relation of which only the subjective term is real and the objective term is non-existent, then I say it is something utterly without precedent in the whole history of creation."

Religion, as history shows, is immortal: can its *source* be illusion? Once we grasp the idea of the *essential* nature of religion we understand, too, what is the real *proof* of God's existence. The so-called 'proofs' of God's existence which we find in western books of 'natural theology' *prove* little. The 'arguments' are arguments in a circle.

Again and again has it been declared in Hindu Scriptures that the only 'proof' of God is the witness of the Atman. And did not Christ teach the same truth when he said on a memorable occasion—"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven"? Atheism is possible just because the will of man is free to accept or not the communications of the Atman. Religion rests upon *internal* testimony; they who have not *that*, may be students of *theology* but they know not the secret of religion; they who *have*

that, stand on secure ground, and instead of being afraid of the progress of natural science and historical criticism, welcome all science and scholarship as friends of *dharma*. Religion, as our Scriptures say, is Brahmaildya or the "Science of God". Theologians in the West have been exercised in their mind over the conflict between science and faith. There is, from the Hindu standpoint, no conflict but an essential harmony between the two. The real conflict is, not between science and religion, but between naturalistic interpretations of science and religion on the one hand; between dogmatic interpretations of religion and science on the other. The conflict, in other words, is between science and superstition, *not* between science and religion.

THE ATMAN'S ENVIRONMENT

THE theory of correlation of forces suggests the idea that science in dealing with physical forces is really concerned with phases, differentiations, transmigrations of but one Force. May we not go a step further and interpret force as the forth-putting of Will—the type and pattern of all forces? Are not *the forces of the world immaterial*? May we not resolve matter into *energy*? Things, then, become forth-puttings of energy, and materialism is merged into religious idealism.

Take a concrete instance. Why do you say that the table before you exists? That your experience of the table, here and now, is a perception, not an illusion? First you *look*; this look involves some *self-activity* or *will-exertion* on your part. But it also involves a positing of the table itself as a reservoir of will-force. Divest the table of this idea of *will-causality*, and the table

ceases to be a thing; it becomes a group of visual impressions, a bundle of sensations, a pale ghost without the flesh-and-blood countenance of reality. The table becomes *real* for you, it is lifted to the realm of percepts, when you refer these visible impressions and sensations to an *active agency* analogical to your own. Again, why do you call that tree real? May it not be an illusion? a subjective affection? How do you resolve the doubt? Once again you will to *look* attentively: you look again and again: you bring into activity the other senses; you touch, you feel, perhaps you bite the tree! When lo! with consciousness thus deepened, there comes the knowledge that you are *being resisted* by what you cannot identify with *yourself*. You know the tree or table because you know each as a centre of *resistance*. Things are dynamic because they are centres of the forth-putting and reception of will-activity. Not without reason do we interpret things after the analogy of the Self. There is no *dead matter*. Tyndall in his famous Belfast Address proposed the question: 'Divorced from matter, where is life?' And he declared that in matter must

be discovered 'the promise and potency of all terrestrial life'. To-day science would rather see in *life* the promise and potency of all matter! All motion is a manifestation of Infinite Life. May we not interpret forces as aspects of the one World-Will?

That nature is constituted on the analogy of the Self, may explain why nature is *intelligible*. "Science," says Lange in his 'History of Materialism,' "starts from the principle of the intelligibleness of nature." Nature is intelligible, because it is an expression of Thought: it is related to our intelligence because it has its structure in Thought. Nature is a system, the world is a cosmos, the universe is not a *multi*-verse, because it has a meaning. We can verify our hypothesis concerning the laws and phenomena of nature, because our mind gives answer to a Mind in nature. A writer records the story of a gentleman's 'conversion' in the following words:—"One day he was walking in the woods reading the writings of Plato. He came to the passage where the Greek thinker uses the phrase:—"God geometrises." He thought to himself:—"If I could only see plan and order in God's works, I could be a believer." Just

then he saw a little 'Pexas star' at his feet. He picked it up and thoughtlessly began to count its petals. He found there were five. Counting the stamens and the divisions at the base of the flower, he found five of each respectively. He then set about multiplying these three fives to see how many chances there were of a flower's being brought into existence without the aid of mind and having in it these fives; the chances against it were one hundred and twenty-five to one. He thought that was very strange. He examined another flower, and found it to be the same. He multiplied one hundred and twenty-five by itself to see how many chances there were against there being two flowers, each having these exact relations of number; he found that the chances against it were thirteen thousand six hundred and twenty-five to one. But all around him were multitudes of these little flowers. They had been growing and blooming for years. He thought this showed the order of intelligence, and that the mind that ordained it was God. And so he shut up his book, picked up the little flower, kissed it, and exclaimed:—"Bloom on little flower!

Sing on little birds! You have a God, and I have a God. The God that made these little flowers, made me."

So interpreted, is not Nature transfigured? Material forms become media through which functions the One,—symbols of

The silent awful Living Word

Behind all sound, behind all thought,—

Whose speech is Nature-yet-to-be,

The Poem yet unwrought.

The *Atman* is in Nature. Does not this idea give us a new outlook upon the world? If the *Atman* is in Nature, then is Nature not soulless. Then the ripple of the river and the murmur of the tree and all the wonders of the world are a showing forth of the One Spirit. Then there is a vision of the One-in-all—of His light in the sun, His beauty in the moon, His benediction on the blushing rose, His emotion in the singing bird, His Love in all.

One of the "New Sayings" of Jesus indicates this idea in a significant manner:—"Jesus saith: Who are they that draw us to the Kingdom in heaven? The fowls of the air and all beasts that are under the earth and upon the earth and the fishes of the

sea,—these are they that draw you.” Another saying of Jesus is:—“Raise the stone and thou shalt find me; cleave the wood and there am I.” The *Chandogyopanishad* says:—“He stands above, below, west, east, south and north.” And in another Upanishad we read:—“He pervades the earth and yet transcends it: the earth moves Him not; the earth is His body: He controls the earth from within.” This *nature-idealism* is the inspiration of Hindu literature. This idealistic interpretation of Nature resting on the idea that God is the World-Soul—the *Hiranyagarbha* of the Vedas—will give, I believe, a new frame-work to western psychology and a new stimulus to western science. Nature is not *alien* to us; she is not an irreconcilable ‘*other*’. The *laws* we discover and the *forces* we discern are not secrets snatched by us but revelations disclosed to us by the Soul of Nature in that hour of ‘wise passiveness’ which pre-supposes patient investigation and truth-impassioned interpretation of Nature. Kant’s things-in-themselves are, from the Hindu standpoint, things-in-God. Rightly is God spoken of as *Antaryamin*, the Immanent.

God, the Absolute Originator, is the Logos of the manifested Universe.

Did you never see the sunset, the sunrise, a mountain, a river, a lake, the moon, the sea, a star? Did you never see some wonderful phenomenon of surpassing loveliness or grandeur and feel that what men call 'material' was a hint of the Ideal? Most of us look at Nature without realising its spiritual significance. Some, again, offer a purely physiological interpretation of the thrill of joy or emotion experienced in the presence of Nature; they forget that Nature's beauty is really *spiritual*: it is the joy of the Eternal in his Self-expression on the physical plane: it is the *Leela* (song) of the Lord.

Civilisation is destined to become more and more scientific, and fear of science may be unfaith in God. Science with its microscope, telescope, spectrum analysis, and biological research is revealing more and more new depths of Reality. The inventions and improvements due to science, may, I hope, draw men all over the world into an International Brotherhood on the physical plane. Scientific concepts concerning the

reign of law, unity of forces and evolution of life have already revolutionised western theology. 'Religion,' said Feurbach, 'is the dream of the human mind.' Feurbach was not a competent student of religious psychology. Far better spoke the old mystic who defined God as an unutterable sigh. Man sighs for God and finds relief when he is in the midst of the great revelations of Nature. Nature has kinship with the Spirit.

Already 'natural selection' is, by some students of science, interpreted as *teleological*: the developmental law is being interpreted as an impulse towards 'progress,'—an effort to realise an 'aim'. Nature is dynamic, because it is weaving the purpose of God: it is a field of God's great experiment to educate finite centres of consciousness. It is a system of Natural Law, 'a system of related appearances,'—to quote the words of T. H. Green—because it is an expression of the Eternal Mind. Nature is the environment for the expression of the life of the Spirit. Science as an interpreter of Nature is thus intimately related to the spiritual life of humanity. The Naturalism of

Spencer, Huxley and Mill, the positivism of Comte, the pessimism of Schopenhauer, and the emotional scepticism of Nietzsche have been tried but have failed as schemes of life. The next forward movement of thought, I believe, is toward Religious Idealism. Western psychology has long assumed that the 'self' is impervious,—'hemmed in,' as Dr. Harnack says, 'by walls of iron'. Experience which is more than speculation points to the truth that the 'self' is penetrable, is open to the suggestions and influences of the Spirit. Not the least of these suggestions and influences come through Nature.

And the more one grows in God, the more one feels that Nature is not alien. There is the law of correspondence; and the greater our progress within the Life of the Spirit, the richer the response we receive from the Universe. A beautiful tradition has it that the great German mystic—Jacob Boehme—received interior illumination from the shining of tin vessels! So may we also receive suggestions concerning the spiritual life from Nature; for Nature is a symbolism used by the Spirit to communicate His messages to

man. Science, as an interpretation of nature, may well be regarded as a religious revelation. It is the belief of my growing years that science and religion will approach each other more and more in the years before us, and both will contribute to the building up of a new civilisation. Science, while being pressed more and more into the service of human progress and the practical life of Man will, I hope, become more and more idealistic in its interpretation of the universe. Indeed, modern science has passed beyond the storm-and-stress period of the Victorian age. Science to-day is beginning to touch the borderland of the 'Beyond'. M. Camille Flammarion wrote: —“That souls survive the destruction of the body I have not the slightest doubt.” And Sir Oliver Lodge observed in a memorable address to the Society for Psychical Research: —“If any one cares to hear what sort of conviction has been borne in upon my own mind, as a scientific man, by some twenty years' familiarity with those questions which concern us, I am very willing to reply as forcibly as I can. Well then, I am, for all personal purposes, convinced of the persistence

of human existence beyond bodily death ; and though I am unable to justify that belief in a full and complete manner, yet it is a belief which has been produced by scientific evidence that is based upon facts and experience." A union of intellect and intuition is the craving of the age. And science and religion must not be regarded as rivals. The twain together weave the spacious Purpose of God.

May we not say, then, that Nature is *māyā*, "uttered Reason"—God's own Environment—an utterance of the Eternal? Think of the grandeur and glory of Nature's growth ; think of the shapes and forms of her sunrise and stars ; think of her music and melody and all her wonders woven with wisdom ; then bend your head in lowly reverence. Nature is working out the will of the Ancient of Days. As the Gita says :—"The world is His Body and the whole of it shines through His lustre."

THE SYNTHESIS OF LIFE

“ARANYAKAS” is a name given to the Upanishads. The name is significant ; it means “forest-books”. These scriptures do not smell of coal and engine-oil ; they have nature’s freshness ; they were taught and studied in the forest-*asrams*, India’s schools and colleges planted not in the conflict and confusion of city life, but in the heart of nature. They who taught the Upanishads were not arm-chair academicians but men who touched life at the centre ; they were artist-thinkers ; they spoke in symbols, an effective way of suggesting the profound, saying much in little ; they loved nature and realised that unity of thought and emotion which is the secret of a truly rich life. The Upanishads are charged with a feeling, a reverence for nature which modern commercial, aggressive civilisations ignore. Modern knowledge is a light afraid of love ; the *vidya* of the Upanishads is a light

which glows with love for man and bird and beast.

"The highest aim of knowledge," says the Chandogyupanishad, "is the *atman*, the Self." With love and longing in their hearts did they study the Science of the Self in ancient India; and in great assemblies some even of India's princes and kings took an interest in this Science, asking questions concerning the mystery of life, and prizing above all earthly things the Knowledge of the deep things of the Spirit. So we read that when Yagnavalkya unfolded the 'Science of the Self' to king Janak of Videha, the king was filled with joy and said to the sage Yagnavalkya:—"I give a thousand cows." And stories are told of kings who gave away their kingdoms on such occasions. Other interests engage the world's attention to-day; the *atmavidya* is become with many a term of reproach, a word for superstition and ignorance; some regard it with Max Nordau as a 'symptom of degeneration'!

There is a beautiful story in one of the Books—the story of the disciple who, meditating on the great Mystery, said first that Brahman (God) was *anna* (matter), next that Brahman was

prana (life), next that He was *manas* (sensation), then that He was *vignan* (intellect) and last that Brahman was *ananda* (love-joy). Brahman is Joy. In this bold declaration the sages of the Upanishads have recorded their vision of the World-whole, their conviction concerning the final synthesis of life. The first synthesis, 'Brahman is matter' (*anna*) is so crude, so imperfect; yet there was a time—not so very long ago—when this view of the Universe was regarded as the latest finding of science and reflective consciousness. Moleschott said:—"Man is the sum of parents and nurses, of place and time, air and weather, noise and light and clothing." Cynder wrote a book on "Man a Machine"! Gradually the idea dawned that 'matter' itself was but a centre of forces, that man was not a mere machine. 'Brahman is *prana*' is the next synthesis; but this, too, is incomplete. Spencer was anxious to derive all from an Unknown Energy. But the Energy of the Universe is not unknown; the World-will is not blind. Kelvin and Wallace point out that one is justified on scientific grounds in believing that Nature has a "directive

intelligence". Brahman is sensation (*manas*) is also an inadequate synthesis. Mill tries to interpret the universe in terms of sensations and groups of sensations linked by laws of association. Mill's attempt fails to account for the synthesis of experience; he does not grapple with the problem concerning the World-ground, the source of sensations. 'Brahman is intellect, understanding' (*vignan*) is the next step in the development of the disciple in the story. And there *is* purpose, there *is* intention in the universe; but is there nothing more in the mighty striving which strews nature's path with innumerable forms of beauty every day? Intellect has its limits; it is but one instrument evolved by the universe for interpreting the phenomenal: to touch reality at the very centre we must develop intuition. The 'rishi' of the Upanishad had an intuition of the World-whole, an insight into Reality; and so with a profound soul-emotion he declared:—Brahman is Love, Brahman is Joy!

Turn over the pages of the Upanishads, and you will find, over and again, declarations such as the following:—"The Infinite is Joy:

there is no joy in anything finite divorced from the Infinite." "Even as a grain of rice or the smallest granule of the millet, so is the golden Purusha (Person) in my heart; even as a smokeless light, the Purusha is greater than the sky, greater than ether, greater than the earth, greater than all existing things; that Self is my self; and verily whoever has this trust, for him there is no uncertainty." "The Self of selves, the Ancient Purusha, He who is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, is verily the life of life, the eye of the eye." This truth of the *Antaryamin Purusha*, the Indwelling Self, is sung, again and again, by the Upanishads. Man is man because the Eternal Purusha (Person) dwells in him; God is the deepest Self of man. Just think of this idea! Each one of us a child of Eternal Joy! We read this story in the Books:—Alexander the Great orders an Indian Yogi to follow him to Greece and Rome. The Yogi will not leave India. Unafraid of the King, he says:—"Greece and Rome are within me". He is threatened with death if he disobeys the mighty conqueror; but he stands unmoved; none can kill him,

he says, for his real self is immortal. Such fearless men are the nations' need to-day—men who will not be brow-beaten into disloyalty to the God within. Often we feel depressed, perplexed, sorrow-smitten: on such occasions, may we not remind ourselves of the truth that we are sons of Eternal Joy? Our hearts, our minds, our hands, our eyes are meant to be His: let us *make* them His; then may we stand up in courage and self-respect to declare the Divinity in us. Inheritors of Immortality, why wander we as beggars, as exiles in the House of Life?

The Upanishads sing of nature-communion because they sing of *Ananda* or Joy as being the heart of the Universe. Schopenhauer confounded the *Ishwara* of the Upanishads with his own *Wille Lu Leber*, "the will-to-live" struggling, never attaining to a consciousness of unbroken bliss,—a blind force, a non-moral energy. Naturally Schopenhauer fancied that the Upanishads were pessimistic. Yet, read aright, these Books will be found to sound the note of a lofty, sane optimism. Was it Goethe who said?—"The highest we have received from God is Life." And the

Upanishads say:—"All things tremble with Life, the life of the Universe." And God's Life is *Ananda*—Joy. So we read:—"In Joy he giveth Himself to us." What is Joy, *Ananda*? Whatever expresses itself is *Ananda*. *Ananda* is expression. Expression is Joy. The artist expresses himself on the canvas and experiences joy; the singer and the speaker express themselves and feel the joy of self-utterance. God, the Parent-Spirit, utters himself in the Universe, and Nature trembles with the spirit of Joy. Nature is *Ananda leela*, the love-Joy of the Lord breaking forth into different forms. Nature has often been regarded as little better than a sum of utilities, and men have regarded themselves as her overlord. This attitude of overlordship must give way to one of reverent love or there can be no nature-communion. This reverent love for nature expressed itself in a variety of ways in the age of the Upanishads. Education was regarded as fellowship with the pure and with Nature; so sprang up the 'Forest Universities' of India where the Upanishads were composed and sung and taught and lived: so were built up the *tirthas*—the places of pilgrimage. It is not a little

significant to note that all *tirthas* are places invested with the beauty and sublimity of nature. So developed the sentiment that water, food, and other things were sacraments by means of which the soul was purified; so was matter regarded as something transfused with Life Divine,—a channel for the down-pouring of Divine Love. Man and Nature were knit together in the One Worship and the One Service; and sitting in the forest, or on the mountain-height or by the side of a lake or riverbank, the rishi felt he was not alone in his worship: he and they formed one chorus of prayer to the Spirit. So we read:—"Trees worship Him with flowers." Nature came to be regarded as a Teacher, an Inspirer, a Healer of Man; so the great king Rama is represented as saying while dwelling in the forest during the period of his exile: "By looking at *Chitra Koota*, I forget all sorrows of exile and do not feel that I am away from home." But nature was incomplete without animals; they, too, belonged to the soul of nature, and the Rishis loved the deer and the cow as their own children. Yudhishthira, as represented in that beautiful story in

the Mahabharata, refuses to go to Heaven forsaking his faithful dog. "I shall not go alone," he says; and he and his faithful dog together enter the Heaven-world. So great was India's love for animals that it became a vegetarian nation. *Ahinsa*, harmlessness, became the essence of religion. If this doctrine of *Ahinsa* were more widely accepted to-day, would there be the politics of hate which mar the life of the nations? One of the sins of the modern world is its denial of nature. Physically we suffer from want of open air. Is it any wonder we succumb so easily to coughs, colds, and chills? Disease is due to lack of fellowship with nature. Mentally we live lives of unrest; we are not at home with the Universe: restlessness is the malady of the modern age. And can it be denied that the virtue of simplicity is being steadily displaced by fashion and luxury? Well did Thoreau write:—"The morning wind ever blows; the poem of creation is uninterrupted, but few are the ears that hear it." If morally we have succumbed to fashion and luxury, spiritually we have lost kinship with the universe; we are reluctant to worship the Great Life,

the God-Life in nature. Zoroaster spoke words of wisdom when he said:—"Ye shall therefore hearken to the soul of nature." Let us build new schools and colleges in places invested with the beauty and sanctity of nature's life: let us establish *Forest-asrams*; let us make it possible for the poor, struggling in big smoky cities, to live a fresh open-air life; let us take steps not simply to develop the intellect but also to educate the heart. Through nature-communion will come to us love of the simple life; then we may re-establish our kinship with the lower animals; and, experiencing reverence for what is beneath us, we may have a true self-reverence which is reverence for what is within us and above us and around us;—the Self who is the In-soul of all. A new art may then be born; a new vision of beauty then may come to us; a new apprehension of Brotherhood may then be ours.

THE PATH OF SELF-REALISATION

THE path of Self-realisation is a difficult path, 'sharp as the edge of a razor,' to quote the words of a Upanishad. And one treads the Path step by step.

The very first step is referred to as *viveka*: perhaps the word may be rendered as *awakening*. What is *viveka*? Viveka comes when the seeker begins to apprehend—very dimly it may be—that he must not identify himself with the body. The self, the *atman*, is different from the body, the *sthula sarira*. And when I say that the *atman* must be distinguished from the body, I do not mean that the body must be neglected. Asceticism cannot be the last word of the spirit of life immanent in the universe: the body has its claims which must not be ignored; it is the *kshetra*, the field, the environment of *kshetragna*, the *atman*. The body is even as the musical instrument in the hands of the musician; give your musician a broken instrument, and the notes produced

will be discordant. Even so, if you desire to beat a rich soul-music out, see that your body is sound, strong, and pure. And so when we are told that the self should be distinguished from the body, we, surely, are not told that we should ignore the claims of the body but only that we should know that there is a larger self than the brain-consciousness.

It is but a small part of the Self that works in the *kshetra*—the field—represented by our physical brain; there is the subliminal, the supraliminal, the metempirical, the transcendental in us that overpasses the waking consciousness, and to that a conspicuous witness is borne by genius in every realm—Art, Literature, Thought, Action, Religion—genius which cannot be explained in terms of its immediate environment because it overcomes, transforms, transcends its environment by means of that which it brings from the Larger Self. The *atman* is the Larger Self, the breath breathed in by the Lord: so we read in an ancient Book concerning *Prajapati*:—“In building the worlds and the beings, He entered with His Own Self into His own Self.”

We are immersed so much in things bearing upon the body that many of us have little time left to develop this *atman*-consciousness. Yet this awakening comes, though it comes to different men in different ways. There be some who develop this *atman*-consciousness through the longing to understand. That was the case with Shri Shankaracharya. His soul was smitten with the desire to know; he was anxious to know the universe; he had the longing to understand the great problem of life; and as he went upon his great quest, the quest of Knowledge, the *atman*-consciousness developed within him, and he understood the truth that whatever we see, the visible, the seen, the physical, the phenomenal, is an expression of the Eternal Unseen; to him the *atman*-consciousness came; for him the *atman* consciousness asserted itself through this longing to understand. And there be others, again, in whom this *atman*-consciousness is developed through sympathy with others, through some experience of suffering or sorrow. That was the case with him who became the Buddha, the Wise one. He saw sights of suffering and

his heart was smitten with anguish and he left his father's palace, he left his wife, his new born babe ; he went upon his great quest. The *atman*-consciousness in him was developed because he came in contact with certain forms exciting in him a feeling of compassionate love. And so there be other ways in which the *atman*-consciousness is developed. We read in a great Indian book—the autobiography of the father of our Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore—how the *ātman*-consciousness was developed in him. The *Maharshi* tells us how when he was a boy his eyes fell one day on a little scrap of paper and he picked it up and found that on the scrap of paper were written words in a language he did not well understand ; he sent for a *pandit* and asked him to interpret to him what was written on that piece of paper, and the *pandit* found that this particular scroll had reference to a text taken from one of the Upanishads :—“Renounce the things (of the lower life) and rejoice in the Lord.” And when he read this he said to himself :—“Here, even here, is the message of the Lord for me.” And after this he gave up luxuries ; he developed those soul-intuitions which have

given him an honoured place in the history of Modern India. And so in a variety of ways, this *atman*-consciousness is developed in man. Sometimes, it may be, you have a look at the face of a *sadhu*, a pure soul, or some great Teacher, some earnest seeker after God, and you see upon the face of such an one the stamp of purity, of calmness, of peace, of *shanti*, and your *atman*-consciousness is developed. You listen, perhaps, to a preacher, and he touches your heart-strings, and your *atman*-consciousness is developed. You lose a beloved friend, some one you have learned to love, some one round whom have clustered countless associations of reverence,—he is suddenly withdrawn from your midst, and your *atman*-consciousness is developed. You feel, sometimes, that the world-pressure upon you is so heavy that you cannot bear it; you shed tears of sorrow, and then you feel there is a new stir in your soul, you feel as if you have touched new depths of reality in you, and you wake up one morning a new man, a transformed man, a man in whom this *atman*-consciousness is developed. So it is, the first stage the seeker must pass through

is the stage of *atman*-consciousness. It is the stage of *viveka*, of awakening.

The next step on the path is that of *sadhan*, or self-discipline; after *viveka* comes *sadhan*. When the awakening has come, the seeker naturally desires to discipline himself. And the secret of self-discipline is purity. Heart-purity—not purity of action alone, but purity of motive, thought and impulse—is the virtue the seeker must cultivate if he is anxious to proceed further along the path. As one of the Upanishads has declared it, the knots of the heart must be snapped; the bars of desires must be broken; the heart must be pure.

Then comes the third step. After the seeker has subjected himself to a process of discipline, after he has developed heart-purity, he finds that there descends upon his soul a flood of light, and he feels interior joy; he begins to realise the truth that God is with us and within us. On this account it is that he, the seeker, is filled with great joy; he finds that he can worship for a long time; he finds he can offer prayers to God hour after hour and yet not be tired; he finds he can meditate on

the divine mystery much longer than he formerly could; he does not simply take an interest in religion as so many of us ordinarily do, but he experiences joy in the pursuit of religious life; he feels that he has entered the very temple of joy; religion to him is not a matter of mere *sadhan*, a matter of discipline. Religion to him is a source of perpetual joy; and so in the fullness of joy he sings the name of God and feels inclined to dance: filled with joy, he glorifies the name of the Lord.

Then it is he steps on to another stage in his development. The light seems to retreat; he feels that God has withdrawn Himself; he is filled with anguish; he seems to enter a realm of darkness; he cries with a piteous cry "O Lord! O Master! where art Thou?" he cries again and again; he receives no response; he hears no voice of answering love; he knows not it is for his good that the Eternal, the Self-Revealing Spirit, thus *conceals* Himself. After experiencing the joy of the religious life, he thinks that religion is always and altogether a matter of joy; he is mistaken; he needs must learn the truth that none is allowed to stay within the Holy

Temple who is anxious only to experience joy; the religion of joy must be supplemented by the religion of suffering. And when this period of darkness comes upon the seeker, he has temptations to renounce the Path altogether. Many there be who renounce religion when they face difficulties; they are not prepared to enter the realm of darkness. It is really a blessing when the seeker is called upon to enter the realm of darkness; it is then that he is called to a closer fellowship with the Lord; through suffering he is enabled to practise the *andhakar Yoga*, the yoga of darkness. It is then that he develops a *child-attitude*, an attitude of faith. Once he, the seeker, saw the splendour of the sun; once he was in a realm of illumination and joy; and having seen the splendour of the sun once, he will say to himself in the day of darkness:—"The sun existeth still; only a cloud has come in between me and the Eternal Light"; and recalling his past experiences, he will lean as a child on the Lord and say:—"Master, though Thou slay me, yet must I trust in Thee." This is the attitude of *shraddha*. No soul may expect to make

progress along the path of which I am speaking unless it is prepared to develop this *shraddha* attitude, this *faith-consciousness*. It is the attitude of the *sadhu* who could cry out of the fullness of his trust, amid a host of trials:—"What the Beloved desires must also be the desire of my heart." The man of *shraddha* sees the one purpose in all the pains of nature, all the toil of life. He knows that nothing good is lost; that not one aspiration for the good is destroyed; that every trouble is a messenger from the Beloved; that every pain is an invitation which develops the eye of the soul to behold the beauty of the Cosmic Secret—the wonder of the All-Love.

Then there is another step to be taken. Physical suffering is trying, exceedingly trying, sometimes agonising; but something still more trying must be encountered by the seeker. It is referred to in the books as the *vastra-haran*—the stripping of the soul. Not simply must the seeker endure physical sufferings; he should be prepared to part with everything belonging to him; the soul is called upon to strip herself of all she has. First the senses must be stripped off. This does not mean that the

seeker should become physically blind; it means that the *sense-view* must be transcended. Ocular demonstration is a test of the phenomenal, not the real. Reality is not sensed; the seeker after the Highest should rise above the suggestions and stimuli of the senses; he should stand above the storm of the phenomenal and greet external objects—a flower, a tree, a star—as various *rupas*, manifestations, appearances of the Eternal. Then there is the *manas* to be stripped off. *Manas* is often translated as ‘mind,’ ‘intelligence’; and you will naturally think it is a very strange and startling statement to say the *manas* should go. Why, you will ask, should the seeker renounce intelligence? Reason has a high and honoured place in the universe; culture has no quarrel with religion; science and spirituality are not rivals but friends, helpers, twin agents of the Eternal to weave God’s gracious purpose in the loom of time. Yet we are told that the *manas*—the mind—must be renounced. When the word *manas* or mind is used in the books, what is meant is *calculation*; *manas* is the principle of calculation. Often we are engaged upon

external pursuits of life that we may gather only silver and gold. We have converted—we have corrupted—our minds into calculating machines. And he who is anxious to proceed along the Path, must learn to give up calculation as the arithmetic of fools; he must not indulge in idle controversies and unkind criticism; the seeker's heart must be filled with God-enthusiasm. Then there are the *desires* to be renounced. One great desire to be given up is *ahankar*, pride. *My* possessions, *my* position, *my* accomplishment, etc.,—this *personal* pride must be given up. My family, my society, my group;—this *social* pride must also be renounced. Or *ahankar* may refer to *my* nation. I yield to none in my love for India and my reverence for the great Truths enshrined in the scriptures and traditions and temples of Aryavarta. But, surely, reverence for the nation is different from national greed and national vanity; national interests must never trample upon the supreme claims and sanctions of Humanity; and if I pray that India may be great and free and speak her message and make her influence felt in the reconstructions of the Age, it is

not that India may be arrogant and selfish but that she may serve greatly the human race.

Then another step, which also must be taken if the seeker is to walk the way. He has endured much in the realm of darkness; his senses, *manas*, and desires have been stripped off; he stands naked before the Lord. The Lord of Love appears to be still more cruel; the seeker now must suffer the anguish of death itself. Absolute self-renunciation—*tyāg*—is the meaning of this death; he must not simply give up his senses, his *manas* and his pride: he must also renounce his will; self-will must be crushed, self-crucifixion must be experienced. I am not sure if we always understand what is the secret of this self-annihilation; it involves something more than passive self-surrender. To retain peace in the midst of pain is the secret of annihilation. Often we renounce our wills because we cannot help doing so; we surrender ourselves to others simply because we find they are stronger, mightier than we. But to harbour not a single thought of ill-will against those who come to smite and slay you, and to feel

that your heart is undisturbed, is filled with a strange peace,—this is to practise self-annihilation in daily life. There is a touching story set forth in a novel published years ago. The author imagines that a great teacher comes back to this earth-plane and on coming back finds not faith among men; his teachings have been misunderstood; the fair, beauteous face of truth has been distorted; the master's message is massacred in the house of those who confess his name; and he goes about doing good, re-publishing the truths he once had taught though in another body and another garb. He finds that the great masses, the poor, the penitent sinners give response—the answer of love—to his message. But those in authority launch a campaign against him; they understand him not; for they have lost themselves in pursuit of the things of the earth which are antagonistic to the life of the spirit. So these big men combine against him, and after a mock trial deliver the judgment that he is an enemy of faith and must be burnt to death; the leader of the priests communicates to the teacher the judgment and asks him to be ready for the funeral pyre.

The teacher is meek and calm and silent as ever are the great ones of the spiritual world ; he follows the priest, and just a little before mounting the funeral pyre, he draws nigh to the priest. What does the Teacher do ? With a divine smile lighting up his lips, he kisses the priest and enters the fire ! There you have an illustration of what is meant by self-annihilation, of what it is to harbour not a thought of ill-will against those who would malign and persecute you, and to have peace and love always in your heart.

And then—what then ? The seeker now listens to the music of the Lord ; and even as he listens to the notes of music that come from the Eternal, he understands that he did not tread the path alone, that every encouragement he experienced in his trial-period, every stimulus to higher life, every noble aspiration, was really due to the wondrous notes which proceeded from the Song of the Lord. Then he understands that he has gained the goal because the Lord has been by him as the unseen guide, that if he has sought the Lord, it is because the Lord has sought him—pursued him with Love from the beginning of his days.

So true it is that the Eternal is the lover of the human heart.

Then also the seeker finds that the Lord gives back what He took from him; for the Master is ever kind, ever gracious: only, the things which are returned are now transformed, beautified, changed into something rich and fair. The senses return to the seeker, but every sense is now an avenue of a beauty such as never before was seen on earth or sea. The *manas* is returned, but so illuminated with wisdom that when he sees the universe he finds it charged through and through with the glory of a growing purpose. Desires come back to him, but they are transformed into aspiration and longing for the only Love. Will returns to him, but it is no longer capricious, fitful, appetite-ridden; it is a will strong, steady, vigorous, in harmony with the one Living Will of the universe. Then he experiences a joy which is not rest, not hedonic pleasure, but the very consummation of self-donation to the Lord,—the rapture of self-renunciation.

With this rapture in his heart he comes back to the earth-plane, back to suffering, struggling humanity, back to those who cry and

weep and mourn and yearn for a vision of the beauty that is transcendent. He returns to the plane of work, to struggle with things material for the sake of the world's suffering ones; he returns to share with them his joy. This is *mukti*, this is self-realisation,—sharing with others the joy of the Eternal. In this service, he mingles with matter but is above the taint of *karma*.

O my Friends! civilisation is being hurled back to barbarism; the vision of human brotherhood is being drowned in strife. But the universe refuses to renounce beauty and joy. The stars shine on; the flowers bloom on; the cosmic consciousness will not lose a single note of the joy that floats from planet to planet, from star to star; the God-in-nature summons the God-in-man to go upon a great ministry of help and healing to the sorrow-smitten nations. Only breathe out an aspiration to the Highest and you will be drawn to the Centre of Harmony; and your life, no matter how small, will work wonders. For His Will will absorb you. His light will shine upon you. He will enter into you. And through your shy, lisping words may be sounded the very music of the secret that is God.

BACK TO THE EAST

THE more I think of it, the more I feel that the message of the Atman is the need of Western theology and Western life. That there is need of reconstruction in Christian Theology, few will deny. Years ago Carlyle raised the cry in his 'Sartor Resartus'; he pointed out that the old Hebrew 'clothes' of Christian Theology were outworn and did not suit the age. Arnold, 'the apostle of sweetness and light', lamented that the old faith was gone. The West, weary of the problems and word-puzzles of ecclesiasticism, cries with a piteous cry for some new word of Power. The Idea of the Atman is needed for the re-constructions of the New Age. It will consecrate culture to Faith and both to Truth; and by vindicating a Divine interpretation of the Universe, it may give a New Synthesis of civilisation and religion. By assimilating science, by conciliating the claims of culture with the sanctions of Faith, by

honouring reason as a revelation of the Spirit, by vindicating the function of mystic sense—the Atman-Idea may give to the West a reinterpretation of Christ and his message.

The Hindu heart is, I believe, well equipped for the task of giving a re-interpretation of Christ. Magnificent is the spiritual equipment of the Hindu. He is by instinct a lover of the contemplative life. The inner life has a great fascination for the Hindu. The mystic apprehension of the Light Within is a characteristic of the Hindu race-consciousness. So it was that the Hindu devotee sang:—"I wandered till I found the Light Within." The contemplative nature of the Hindu helps him to realise the idea of Eternity better than the Western who is involved in a feverish struggle of life. Intense religiousness is another characteristic of the Hindu consciousness. To the Hindu everything is a sacrament. Eating, drinking, and the social functions of life have for him a sacramental significance. The Hindu, therefore, easily understands and appreciates symbolism. He can easily enter into the meaning of Christ's parables. Indeed, the

pictorial parable-method of interpreting the verities of religion appeals with special force to the imaginative reason of the Hindu. He instinctively recognises the truth of the soul's transcendence over the body and the spiritual ministry of matter, with the result that the healing phenomena of Jesus, which are a stumbling-block to many in the West, offer little difficulty to the Hindu mind. The healing phenomena of Jesus were a witness to the truth that Jesus was alive in the Spirit and a Seer of the Law of God in our body. I love to think of Christ as a Healer of Mankind. Heart-love, *bhakti*, is the third great characteristic of the Hindu. Hindu literature is charged through and through with a lyric cry of love for the Lord. Hindu poetry has a note of yearning for a vision of the Father Unveiled. The Hindu heart cries for the Presence of the Only One—Immediate, Self-revealed, the One between Whom and the heart nought may stand as a screen. While the dominant note of the Jewish Scriptures is 'faith,' the Hindu Scriptures ring with a cry for 'vision'; the Jewish word is *covenant*; the vital word with the Hindu is *communion*. "I

am Isis, and my veil no man hath lifted." But the Hindu has longed to see the Spirit unveiled; he has practised penance; he has offered sacrifices; he has gone upon pilgrimages; he has evolved a science of *yoga*; he has thought and meditated and prayed and wept and worshipped to see the shining Mystery of the Self.

The idea of the 'Word' of God appeals to the Hindu heart. The doctrine of the 'Word,' indeed, is not alien to Hindu consciousness. An old Hindu hymn concerning the *vach* is inspired by the idea of the Self-utterance of God. And Sri Krishna in the Gita speaks of *Sabda Brahman*, which means "The Word of God". Incarnation is manifestation of the Eternal in time; it is God's communion with man; it is fellowship of Love with the finite; it is Divine Self-communication; the human is not alien to the Divine. God mingles in the life of man that man may enter the Society of God.

So it is that we may conceive of 'incarnation' not as a static incident of the past, but as a continuous process. And may we not distinguish between the *Word* or Christ, and *Jesus*?

The 'Word' worked in Jesus, but the 'Word,' worked in other great religious teachers also, such as Krishna and Buddha. They are "central individuals" in the Kingdom of Spirits: in them is the Divine Word published: they are the "anointed ones" who intervened in the bad heredity of environment in order to build a new environment for the evolution of the Race.

Let me, in passing, indicate the meaning, as I understand it, of the Christ-consciousness in Jesus. The centre-point of the Christ-consciousness in Jesus was a consciousness in Jesus of His filial relation to God. And the sense of his filial relation to God daily deepened. Jesus waxed in wisdom and grace day after day. There was growth in Jesus of the Christ-consciousness. Indeed, Atman-consciousness is not a static deposit; day by day must one renew relations with the Spirit.

To Renan, Jesus was only an "æsthetic" soul. Professor Seeley in the "Ecce Homo" spoke of Jesus as a 'reformer' filled with enthusiasm for humanity. The rationalist speaks of Jesus as simply a teacher. The westerner

needs to reinterpret Jesus in the light of the Hindu idea of *avatār*.

Interpreting, further, Jesus' sense of the *Atman*, I may invite attention to the following: (1) Jesus' consciousness of daily dependence on the Father. To the Hindu the filial relation is essentially one of dependence; a son's attitude is never that of *equality* with the father; whatever the social office of the son, it is the father who must take precedence in all social functions of the community. Jesus' consciousness of sonship was a consciousness of *daily dependence* on, not of *equality* with, the Father. He walked the way of the Cross; his dependence involved renunciation of self-will; (2) Jesus' *inward vision*. In Hindu books the son is looked upon as an image of the father,—one in whom the father produces himself and continues his work. In Jesus was this sense of intimate relationship with the Father. He lived in communion with the Father-consciousness. "The Kingdom of God is within;" and Jesus calls everyone to recognise the mystic mingling of God and Man, and find the Father in the soul. (3) Jesus' *practice* of the Vision.—Every

vision is a call to *practice*; and Jesus *did* the Will of the Father in daily life. Sonship is *service*. Hence Jesus' intimacy with sin and suffering. Jesus calls Europe to *at-one-ment* with Humanity.

In some calm moments, indeed, I have felt that Christ needs some apostles who may call back the Church of Jesus to the Spiritual Ideal. Such new Apostles of Christ may come again from the East. Surely, India is in a better position to appreciate the meaning of His life, the message of His death. In no other nation is the mystic sense of the Unseen alive to such an extent. India may yet interpret the 'Oriental Christ'. Centuries of theological speculation have thrown veil after veil over his personality and obscured the splendour of his spiritual teaching. The East, woven still with nature-wonders of which Jesus loved to speak, where nature still throws her spell of mountain-mystery and awe, where man yet feels the fascination of the most wonderful flora and fauna in the world, where life's dominant interest is yet centred in God, not in swords or guns—the East may yet lift the veils which have

obscured the glow of the gracious figure of Jesus.

Would Europe have a new Renaissance of the Christian consciousness? Then, I humbly submit, must Europe have the help of mystic India. The theologies of Athanasius and Augustine, of the Reformers, the Methodists and the Oxford Movement have played their part. For a new enrichment of Christian consciousness it is essential, as it seems to me, that the West should turn to India. India calls upon Europe to universalise the Christ. The West has long limited the operations of the Spirit to one Individual. In Jesus was the Logos, but not in him alone. The Christian Faith must make a return movement to the East. The Hellenic, Roman, Teutonic and Celtic categories of thought have had their day; the West must now look to India for new contributions. India is rich in the inheritance of Faith; hers are the gifts and graces of a mystic sense eager for a divine interpretation of history and the world. Not without reason does God call her to-day to reinterpret to the West the message of Christ.

THE ONE IN THE MANY

THE Spiritual Ideal, according to the Hindu Scriptures, is supra-sectarian. Again and again is the teaching given that the Atman's influence is confined to no particular clime, age or race. The Hindu has no quarrel with any of the world-religions. I believe in the unity of the world's great religions. If you identify a religion with its *dogmas*, it is true it will be in conflict with other religions. But if you determine the *interior principle* of a religion, you will discern its harmony with other faiths. Unfortunately, we do not always approach the study of other religions in the proper spirit. So cultured a man as the late Sir Monier Williams spoke of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam as 'three false religions,' and contrasted them with 'the one true religion, *viz.*, Christianity'. How much has not the spirit of Islam been misunderstood! Humphrey Predeaux, an Oxford Orientalist, wrote a book

with the title :—" The Nature of Imposture fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomed."! Voltaire in one place speaks of the Koran as a record of 'ridiculous revelations'! A German writer says Islam was due to the Prophet's attack of 'hysteria', and calls Mohamed a 'sublime charlatan'! Another writer speaks of Mohamed as one of 'the illustrious insane'! It was said by one writer that Mohamed was a Cardinal of the Roman Church and competed for the Papal Chair but failed, and in order to be avenged upon the Church of Rome he set up Islam! What a misreading of the great Prophet and the character of his Message!

If you but look beyond the morphological elements (elements of *creed* and *ceremony*) to the *essential* or *spiritual* elements of religion, you will be struck with the *unities* underlying all. "Dig deep down into the human, and you will find the Divine." All the great religions of the world speak of one God—Allah, Jehovah, Hari, Ahura Mazda; and Hindu books recognise the fact that the sages call the One by many names. It is often said that Buddhism is a godless religion. An 'Orientalist' spoke of it as

"the most-godless of all heathen religions"! Buddha, it is maintained by critics, was a philosophical nihilist: did he not declare the end of life to be *nirvana* which means 'annihilation'? So the Teacher whom millions of the East revere, was an unblushing atheist! Surely the practical scheme of life preached by Buddha shows him to be, like Jesus, a spiritual idealist, not a philosophical nihilist or atheist.

Think of the mission on which he sends his twelve great disciples:—"Go ye unto all lands and preach this Gospel; tell them that the poor, lowly, the rich and high are all one, and that all castes unite in this Religion as unite the rivers in the sea." Ever compassionate to sinners, he consents to dine with Amrapali, a courtesan, while refusing to accept the invitations of rich princes. He converts to the Faith a penitent thief. He washes the feet of a monk suffering from a disease so loathsome that none else dared approach him. Betrayed by a treacherous disciple, Devidatta, he speaks the word of forgiveness telling the disciples to walk along the 'middle way'. He points to the unutterable fullness of *Nirvana* as the salvation of every soul. If such a Teacher

were an atheist, then must our theism blush!

The critics complain of Buddha's silence concerning God. They forget there is a silence born of deep spiritual conviction: it is the silence of the mystic who knows the truth that God is Unutterable. A number of men come to him, and anxious some to confound him, some to show their learning, some to fritter away time, ask him metaphysical questions: and Buddha is silent. They misunderstand his silence and call him an atheist. They like word-puzzles and want simple yes-or-no word-solution of those deeper problems of Life which *life*, not lips, must solve: he is silent,—and they call him an atheist! To the great Teacher come a number of controversialists with strings of questions. Buddha, self-controlled and serene, is silent, and they call him an atheist!! Life to him is serious, and so he is silent concerning the questionings of men who are 'curious' about God. "If a man were struck by a poisoned arrow," he says to his disciples, "and his friends and relatives called in a skilful physician, what if the wounded man said: 'I shall not allow my wound to be

treated until I know who the man is by whom I have been wounded, whether he is a noble or a Brahmin, of what family he is, and of what stature?' The man would die of his wound"!!

The Master's heart was smitten with sorrow; he saw the wounds of human souls: he sought to heal them: he had little interest in academic, speculative questions. Buddha had a vital interest in the realities of Religion, not in theories and systems of theology. Life to him was real: life was earnest: and knowing full well the truth that the Unutterable One is known only as the soul assimilates the One in life, he called upon the people to *live* the higher life.

Buddha is silent because he is a spiritual idealist. There are times, too, when he breaks the silence. They call him an atheist when he is silent! They call him an atheist when he speaks! He will have none of the idle externalism of the popular religion of the day: and they call him an atheist! He tells the people to turn to *dharma*; he tells them that the Reality of the Universe is righteous, not capricious; he proclaims the reign of law in the spiritual realm; he tells his disciples

to look to nothing external for salvation but look within and work out their salvation by conformity to the Law which has its witness in the heart of man. He tells them of the Doctrine of the Deed, the Law of *Karma*, interpreting the world as 'woven on every one of its seven sides' with wisdom and moral law. He speaks of Nirvana as the Ultimate, the Imperishable; he speaks of it (Freeman Clarke reminded his generation) as "the eternal world beyond time and space". We read in the Mahavagga that Buddha is asked:—"You are said to teach the doctrine of annihilation (nirvana): is that true?" and the Teacher answers:—"I teach the *annihilation of desire*." Indeed in the *Sudhama Pundarika* ("The Lotus of the Good Law") we read of "the Infinite and Eternal Self-existent Spirit"! A Buddhist preacher, Suzuki, has the following in his 'Sermons':—"Nirvana is not the annihilation of the world and the putting an end to life; but it is to live in the whirlpool of birth-and-death (Samsara) and yet be above it. Nirvana, briefly speaking, is realisation in this life of the all-embracing love and all-knowing intelligence of Dharmakaya." But the critics

have confounded the Teachings of the Master with the nihilist views of *some* advocates of Buddhist metaphysics.

Is it not true, too, that all the world-religions teach belief in prayer, immortality, and the moral law? The idea of the 'Word,' (the 'Logos') is found in Philo, in Clement of Alexandria, in the *Vedas* and the 'Gita'. The doctrine of conscience, again, is beautifully expressed in the *Mahabharata* :

"Thou thinkest : I am single and alone :
Perceiving not the great Eternal Sage
Who dwells within thy breast : whatever
wrong

Is done by thee, he sees and notes it all."

Buddha preaches over and over again the Dharma, the Law of righteousness and loving service. "Know ye, O people! that we are all brethren," says Mohamed. The Chinese sage gives the law : "Recompense injury with kindness", and Manu's words breathe the very spirit of the 'Sermon on the Mount' : "Against an angry man let him not in return show anger : let him bless when he is cursed." So in the Buddhist *Dhamma Pada* we read : "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time ; hatred

ceases by love." The Koran has the words: "Seek again him who drags you away ; give to him who takes away from you ; pardon him who injures you." And is not the following prayer of the ancient Persians an outpouring of the truly devout soul?—"Thou pure and all pervading Spirit, manifest Thyself in me as light when I think, as mercy when I act, and, when I speak, as truth, always truth."

In the ethical codes which have controlled the conduct of men, two great virtues are emphasised ; righteousness and love. And in the sacred scriptures, these two great virtues are referred to over and over again. Think of the Hindu scriptures. Manu speaks of the Ten Commandments and puts emphasis on the virtue of purity and *ahinsa* (harmlessness). The Upanishads say:—"Whatever deed he does, he will also reap." The Bhagavad Gita is charged through and through with the idea of self-renouncing love. The Mahabharata says:—"The Eternal dwells within thy breast : He sees and notes all done by thee."

Read what is told us concerning the closing scene of Buddha's life. He is taking leave of his followers ; his best beloved

disciple is shedding tears. And then Buddha preaches his 'Farewell Sermon'. In this sermon he speaks of his religion as *purity*. Again, we find Buddha giving the teaching which is not without its value to modern India : "Hatred ceases not by hatred ; hatred ceases by love." These two ideas of righteousness and love are illustrated in a variety of ways in the Buddhist books. There is a touching story which I read years ago : it is the story of one who has passed through the various stages of purification and discipline and spiritual culture : he stands on the threshold of the Unseen Nirvana, when he—Bodhisatva he is called in the Buddhist scripture,—hears a cry of sorrow coming from the earth : it is a cry for sympathy, for help. A human being stands in need of sympathy and service. When the Bodhisatva hears the cry he says :—"I shall not enter Nirvana ; but back to earth must I return to take charge of him, that poor struggling brother of mine ; I shall not enter Nirvana till he is saved." The story illustrates the virtue of compassionate service. So in the Christian scripture you have the beautiful story of the prodigal son.

He goes astray. He leaves his father's home. After suffering much and squandering his property he thinks of returning home. Repenting, he returns ashamed to call himself his father's son. He is amazed to find the father is waiting to greet him! His father rejoices over the son's return and gives a rich feast, for the son who was lost is found again. This beautiful story symbolises the love of God for every soul that has gone astray; and a similar story I read some time ago in a Buddhist book. It is the story of a farmer. He has a son. The boy grows up to be very mischievous. He goes out in the street and pelts stones at the passers-by; he finds fault with men and women in the street. Then a meeting of the Village Council is held. It is resolved that the father and the mother of the boy be told to drive him out of their house. The parents, their eyes filled with tears, confess that the boy has gone astray; but as for driving him out of the house, no! they can't do that. Say the father and the mother:—"We shall die on the road-side but we shall not disown our child."

Again, read the books of China. Confucius speaks over and over again of 'the training of

personal character'. We read in one passage : "To know is not as good as to love;" " Mere knowledge is useless". On one occasion his disciples come to him and say :—" Master, give us the one rule of life, the one rule by observing which, we may control our conduct in life." And he says to them :—" My friends, the one rule of life is this :—Do not do unto others that which you do not wish others to do to you." Another great prophet of China—Laotze—teaches the same truths of purity and altruism. Laotze's ideal man is a man of *self-control*. "The sage," he says, "is entirely restful." "The sage prizes essential purity." "Mighty is he who conquers himself". Again :—"To the good I would be good. To the not-good I would also be good, to make them good." "Recompense injury with kindness." Again :—"Heaven endures and the earth is lasting. And why do heaven and earth endure and be lasting? Because they do not live for themselves. On that account do they endure." The more we study the sacred scriptures of the world, the more we understand the significance of their witness to a common moral ideal and common moral aspirations.

The truth is, the *Atman* is immanent in all Faiths. The ancient doctrine of the 'Word' is suggestive in this regard; for true it is that the One Logos-light shines in all religions, the One *Sabda Brahman* speaks in all churches, and the One Religion, which is Life in God, differentiates itself in diverse religions. God Himself is the central Will operating in all religions. In man's search after the Supreme is the prompting of God, the leading of the Parent-Spirit. And between the religious experiences of prophets and saints all the world over there is no conflict; for all speak of the Ineffable Experience, of contact with the Larger Life, of Life in the Spirit.

The question arises: whence came this diversity of religions? Eliminate the passing elements of form and fix your thoughts on the permanent elements of essence in Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam, and you find that diversities give to each religion its distinctive features; and we must not ignore them. How shall we interpret them? Not, as did the learned 'Orientalist,' Sir Monier Williams, who contrasted

Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam as 'three false religions' with 'the one true religion,' viz., Christianity! I maintain that none of the great religions is false. All rest upon the self-revelations of the *Atman*; all are communications to man of the Infinite around us.

The *Atman* acts upon us by influences and suggestions; and diversities set in according as we respond to the influences and suggestions of the Spirit. The knowledge of God is relative to capacities and environments; this is the principle of the *accommodation* of Truth to the soul of man.

The great religions of the world are records of the responses of prophetic souls to the influences, illuminations and suggestions of the Spirit: they are the *impressions*—may I use the word 'visions'?—of the great religious geniuses as they stood in the presence of the Supreme Mystery spelling out, each according to his endowments—personal, racial, environmental,—some meaning of the Message. There is a law of selection in the spiritual world: every prophet selects for special emphasis and assimilation an aspect of the eternal Truth: this subjective selection

is determined by racial culture, the genius of the people, the spirit of the age, the elective affinity of the personal founder, and the endowments and aspirations of the personalities in which the revealed Message develops in the process of appearing as a historical religion.

Each world-religion is an embodiment of experiences of the communion of Great Souls with God. Each has grown out of the Atman-consciousness of prophets and leaders of religion ; each has obeyed the law of the survival of the fittest ; each has established itself by being the bearer of a Message ministering to some vital needs of Man.

There were no 'wars of religion' in India, no persecutions in the name of faith, as were in Europe. The Hindu is tolerant and more ; he understands that each religion has something special to give ; and I believe the time is come to gather together the contributions of all so that the life of the Race may be enriched. The reverence of Hebraism, the freedom of Hellenism, the moral earnestness of Zoroastrianism, the practical idealism of Buddhism, the sacrificial love of Christianity, the vigorous faith of Islam, the mysticism of

the Hindu religion—various types of the one religious consciousness—must all be blent.

There has been, alas! conflict in the religious world; mutual suspicions, mutual jealousies, mutual antagonisms, ill-will and hatred of religions have marred their influence and supplied the sceptic with a strong weapon of attack against the forces of Faith. The time has come to unify our forces so that the Faiths of the world may work together strengthening each other's strength and supplying each other's deficiencies. I believe that the religions of the world are not rivals but brothers. I dream of a day when the various world-religions will come together and each will sound a note concerning the Spirit Whom the sages call by various names. Hinduism may sound the note of God's immanence and human solidarity; Christianity the note of God's Fatherhood and the way of the Cross, Islam of the sovereignty and transcendent unity of God; Buddhism of ethical idealism and the service of God in man; Zoroastrianism of purity of thought, word and deed which, once attained, will usher in the day of Ahura-mazda—the day of world-deliverance—the

day of peace beyond the touch of pain. And out of the commingling of these and other notes may be evolved a symphony which the world needs—a music which may move to mighty deeds the sons and daughters of East and West—a new song of help and healing to the Nations.

SOCIAL MYSTICISM

ONE of the words for religion in Hindu books is *dharma*. The word indicates that there is an organic connection between the social and the spiritual. Dharma is the Law which holds, binds, builds life. Religion is a *way of life*. Hinduism must not be confounded with quietism; Hinduism built up a mighty civilisation; and Aryan India stood, at one time, on the heights of civilisation. What the world needs is neither quietism nor extreme pragmatism which is utilitarianism; the world needs *social mysticism* which is a harmony of communion and service, of *yoga* and *karma*.

And so mystic India fain would ask the vigorous West not to confound the practical with the material. The social must rest upon a spiritual basis of life. The error, as it seems to me, of what F. C. S. Schiller calls 'humanism' is just this denial of the unseen, spiritual

foundation of society. Sidgwick wrote in his "Method of Ethics"—"A new religion is going to arise; we are not to give up worshipping; we are going to transfer our worship from God to humanity." This 'worship' will give us not a new religion but, at best, a benevolent secularism. If the West wants a better social order it must, I humbly submit, accept the Hindu teaching of *dharma* and the Aryan doctrine concerning the Law of Karma.

Comte's "Religion of Humanity" has failed to satisfy the West; 'its ideal lacks the note of Infinitude'. A *spiritual* interpretation of the life of Humanity must take the place of the naturalistic view which seems to find favour among so many in the West to-day. One of the Western thinkers says that man's "origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no force, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual beyond the grave," and that "the whole temple of man's achievements must inevitably be carried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins". Interpreted thus,

human beings become little better than "nervous machines" with "a useless appendage of consciousness somehow added". View the human race simply as a biological organism,—as an assemblage of individuals born in time and perishing with the process of the suns,—and it will at best have claims on your social duty; it cannot inspire you with supreme devotion. On the other hand, view the human race as a *spiritual organism* whereof every member is immortal, and you feel Humanity is worth working for, suffering for, dying for. Social service must have its inspiration in the love of God. Simmel and Hoffding seem to ignore this truth. It is not enough to recognise the *working* value of Religion. It is necessary to postulate a Spiritual Self.

Hence the need of 'meditation'. In this age of machines and motor-cars we are apt to ignore the place of meditation in actual life; it is often thought that to meditate is to vegetate. There is lack of faith to-day in the vital values of the Ideal. Duhring bases his "Philosophy of the Actual" on the assumption that the Ideal is unpractical; and Duhring wishes to be 'practical'! He forgets that the Ideal *is*

the Real, and, therefore, is the ground-work of all that is practical in the best sense of that word. A servant of Humanity must also be a worshipper of the "*Ātman* in the heart".

BROTHERHOOD OF THE NATIONS

WHAT is the situation of civilised nations ? A thoughtful Englishman, Mr. Hobhouse, in his book on "Democracy and Reaction," regrets that "during some twenty or thirty years" there has set in a "re-action against humanitarianism"; "the larger conception of right has lost its force"; "human wrongs and sufferings do not move us as they did". "The easy materialism of our time wants to hear no more of principles in politics and how they are endangered and how maintained." "The check on moral consciousness is paralysed." "There is lust of Empire abroad and the vanity of racial domination." Such is the judgment of a sober English writer. The *bheda-budhi*—separative consciousness—has developed in the West. Indeed an Eastern lover of the West cannot help thinking that the wars of the West, the cut-throat competitions of nations for supremacy, are a commentary on the

'Christian' professions of the West. With grim humour is the point expressed by an American writer:—"Love your enemies so long as they by no possibility do you hurt. But take a big stick, and apply it vigorously to those who despitely use you!" In one of the Hindu scriptures we have the words: "This person is of my country, that one is a stranger: so thinks the man of narrow mind and heart. The noble soul regards the whole wide world as kin." And again: "He who beholdeth all in the Self, his mind strayeth not into sin."

The cult of Nationalism has obsessed Europe; with what results? The cult of Nationalism has meant the cult of power, of race-superiority, of domination. It has proved dangerous to the world's peace; it inevitably results in the conflict of nations. When Europe emerged from the whirlpool of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, its politicians spoke of 'reconstruction,' and when they met at Vienna they said their object was 'the reconstruction of the moral order,' 'the regeneration of the political system of Europe,' 'an enduring peace founded on a just distribution of political forces'.

This 'just distribution' involved the partition of Poland which an impartial historian, Lord Acton, condemned as 'an act of wanton violence committed in open defiance not only of popular feeling but of public law'; and the 'enduring peace' was disturbed, again and again, by revolutions and bloodshed. The British carried on campaigns and annexed Indian territory; there was the war between Austria and Prussia; there was the Franco-Prussian war; there were the Bulgarian atrocities; there was the Russo-Turkish war; there were the wars between Bulgaria and Servia, Russia and Japan, Italy and Turkey. What a sad commentary is this record on the life of Europe! Europe has been restless; there must be something wrong with a civilisation responsible for such restlessness, warfare and bloodshed. That civilisation is dominated by a cult of power and race-pride. Read the story of Europe's advance in the East,—of the massacre of Amboyna, of the Foreign Powers' investments in China, of their game to extend 'spheres of influence.' Even the Socialism of England is hunger-born and has yet to rise to a conception of Humanity as

the indwelling spirit of all nations. England's Imperialism is infected with the sordid dreams of capitalism. In his book 'Organise for Peace,' Mr. Edward L. George indulges in some plain speaking about the British nation. "It is wrong of us," he says, "under the cloak of free trade and righteousness to live on the labours of others." Again :—"Our policies of free trade, free proprietorship to the foreign resident, and our free and easy policies and loose legislation will have to cease or we shall not retain our lead in the world." In another passage the author says :—"We have at heart a very idealistic policy of freedom, but I doubt very much whether we really know what we mean." If, indeed, the Englishman really knew the full meaning of freedom, he would have no rest till India became free. Who will say that the British Empire, with its present line of colour-cleavage, is a Society of Free Nations ?

The malady of European civilisation is its egoism, its greed, its dream of dominion, its lust of gold, its contempt for other types of culture, its cult of power, its narrow nationalisms. Interpreters of this cult have by many

been called 'patriots'; they are really egoists. Civilisation may not be saved without a deep spiritual knowledge. When love of one's country becomes hate of others, it is a disease, and its preachers become disease-spreaders. Nationalism must be related to a Spiritual Synthesis of life; or the Nations will lie bleeding still. That Synthesis India's great Teachers taught in the asrams and during their wanderings abroad. That Synthesis has a value for modern life. For there is the Old which, like the sunrise, does not decay, but returns, age after age, bathed in fresh glory. There is the Ancient which is not the sport of time but belongs to all time. And I have often felt that the Synthesis of Life which Aryan Sages saw has a vital value still. They uttered it in the simple, stately words:—"The Eternal is One; He hath no caste." There you have the creed that civilisation should be based not on *force* but *freedom*, that man is not a fighting animal but a citizen of the Kingdom of Souls. It is the very heart of the arts and philosophies and faiths of the East. This *Atma-vidya* India offers to the West. Not to offer this Vision which the East has worshipped through

the ages, would be to say that we are beggars ; and beggars can have no place at the World-festival of Freedom. Freedom is not in the shout of armies and the clamour of crowds ; freedom is in *atmagnān*, the life of the Spirit. It is a life which may mean poverty and pain. But this poverty enriches, this pain becomes a power of service. The Nations need witness-bearers to the truth that in freedom from greed and pride is the freedom of a people, that in the self-giving which multiplies the joy of humanity is the power and glory of civilisation. The Nations need world-patriots, thinkers and artists, poets and preachers and statesmen, who would lift individuals and states beyond the exclusively national to the Universal, beyond race-pride to a World-vision—the vision of Divine Humanity. For there is pride in the heart of the dominating civilisations. There is pride in our patriotism and philanthropy. There is pride in our fierce shouts of progress. There is pride—and the world's wound aches. There is pride—and Krishna has concealed Himself !